



October 19, 2021

The Honorable Sam Tressler III, Chair
Frederick County Planning Commission
Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Chair Tressler,

On behalf of the over 1,300 members of the Frederick County Association of REALTORS® (FCAR), I write to offer our comments on the draft of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Initiative 4D directs the County to amend the Comprehensive Land Use Map for parcels within the Sugarloaf Plan area. Corresponding Land Use Tables 1B and 1D outline that this involves the proposed rezoning of over 1,000 acres of existing parcels from A-Agricultural to RC-Resource Conservation. While these zoning classifications are similar, they have differing setbacks, minimum lot widths, permitted uses and design requirements, all of which could impact the development potential of those lots going forward.

To our knowledge, the County has not conducted a parcel-by-parcel analysis of how this change would affect those property owners, and whether any lots would effectively be “downzoned” under the new plan. Area property owners should have full knowledge of the development potential of their parcel under both the current zoning scheme and the proposed rezoning. FCAR strongly suggests that this analysis be conducted before the Planning Commission completes its review and prior to any public hearing on the Draft Plan so that those property owners’ concerns may be heard.

In addition, FCAR is unclear as to how a rezoning from Agriculture to Resource Conservation gives additional protection to environmentally sensitive areas, which is one of the justifications

for the proposed change (p.40). There are very few differences in the Resource Conservation district and the Agricultural district as it relates natural resource protection. Because of this, there is less justification to undertake a rezoning that could harm the uses and values of affected properties while also falling short of the County's stated environmental protection goals.

Finally, FCAR questions some of the limits placed upon new construction in the new Sugarloaf Overlay area, as they appear to be arbitrary in nature. On p. A-19, the Plan proposes to limit new non-residential buildings to a maximum size of 15,000 square feet unless the applicant can justify a need and mitigate adverse impacts of a larger building on the environment. This would also extend to existing buildings, which also could not be expanded beyond 15,000 square feet. This regulation addresses a building's size but not its footprint on the lot; indeed, a 20,000 or 25,000 square foot building could have a smaller overall footprint than a single-story building at the maximum allowance. Rather than limiting the size of a structure, a better approach to preventing runoff would be to limit a site's impervious surface area, regardless of its overall square footage.

FCAR also questions the hard limit placed on residential clearing activities, without a similar provision for allowances and mitigation that is granted to non-residential projects. If there is a need to exceed the proposed 40,000 square foot limitation, a developer should have the ability to mitigate the effects of any necessary clearing above the limitation, just as a non-residential developer would.

It is especially important to consider these provisions in the context of the overall housing market in which we find ourselves today. There is a severe housing shortage not just in Frederick, but also in the state of Maryland and across the country. While we are not suggesting that the Sugarloaf Area should be developed with high density residential uses, there are still low-density housing options which are compatible with the area and would help to ease our constrained housing supply. This Plan should take care not to preclude or otherwise constrain their development.

FCAR appreciates your consideration of our comments. Please contact us at any time if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Terry LaScola, President
Frederick County Association of REALTORS®

Dolan, Mary

From: Timothy Pabon <timapabon@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 3:34 PM
To: Superczynski, Denis; Brandt, Kimberly G.; Dimitriou, John; Goodfellow, Tim; Whitmore, Amanda; Keju, Dial
Subject: Letter to Planning Commission

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Planning Commission,

My comments were recorded but not shared at the recent Frederick County Planning Committee Meeting last Wednesday, October 20th.

Here they are in full:

I want to begin my comments by quoting a passage from a book called *The Unconquered* by Scott Wallace: 'Within one hundred years of the establishment of the Jamestown colony in 1607, settlers were well on the way to eliminating the ancient eastern woodlands of North America in what was to become the largest and most rapid deforestation in human history, until the current industrial-scale assault on the world's tropical rainforests.'

If we grant the truth of Wallace's statement, then by necessity we come to understand further land development in Frederick County as part of the larger devastation that our Western values have wrought: values based in greed, and a strange faith that we can be both moral and comfortable without giving anything up. Now the intentions behind the study are good and I sympathize with their aims. There's an implicit acknowledgement that development will not realistically be stopped and so the authors of the study seek to slow down the destruction of the land by employing science-based arguments.

Nevertheless, I feel that there is something undignified about having to make the argument in the first place. What further proof do we need? To measure the future impact of development implies that the past few hundred years of development is insufficient evidence.

Placing the burden of proof on those of us who wish to preserve that which is green and healthy in our world reminds me of making the families of cancer patients prove that cigarette smoke is bad for their loved one's health.

Unless we become strict about mixed-used housing, building vertically instead of horizontally, commuting to work together instead of expanding 270 South, and committing to building self-consuming homes with built-in solar panels and geothermal where possible, we won't attract the kind of people who are willing to wage a protracted struggle between our own short-term gain and the longer-term interests of humanity.

Meanwhile, while we dither and debate and rationalize, the developers grow richer. With every minute that we delay, some small part of Frederick County is paved over and we get one step closer to becoming a parking lot. Thanks for your time.

Tim Pabon

Dolan, Mary

From: Bev Thoms <thoms.bev@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2021 11:55 AM
To: Sugarloaf Area Plan
Cc: Bev Thoms
Subject: Opposition to the 490 Acre Carve out

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I oppose the carve-out of 490 acres of agricultural and conservation land from the Sugarloaf Area plan (which somehow happens to benefit a developer). I support having that land reinstated in the plan and its maps, and thus subject to the same conservation and environmental measures as the rest of the Sugarloaf Mountain area. I do not support commercial or large scale residential developments west and south of I-270. **This area should be preserved for agriculture and particularly for small to medium size farming.**

I otherwise support the framework of the Sugarloaf Mountain Treasured Landscape Management Plan—with the proviso that enforcement measures are added.

Thank you
Bev Thoms
21700 Big Woods Rd
Dickerson, MD 20842

Dolan, Mary

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 8:00 AM
To: Steve Poteat
Cc: Brandt, Kimberly G.; Goodfellow, Tim
Subject: RE: Comments on Sugarloaf Plan

Good morning!

Thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts on the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Your comments will be shared with the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Karen L. James
Administrative Specialist
Division of Planning & Permitting
Frederick County Government
30 North Market Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701
301-600-1138

From: Steve Poteat <cspoteat@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 4:38 PM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Cc: Council Members <CouncilMembers@FrederickCountyMD.gov>; Gardner, Jan <JGardner@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Subject: Comments on Sugarloaf Plan

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

October 18, 2021

To: Frederick County Planning Commission

Cc: Frederick County Council
Frederick County Executive

From: Steve Poteat, Urbana District Resident
Member of Sugarloaf Plan Advisory Group

Subject: Comments on the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan

Let's Preserve the Sugarloaf Triangle

The Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan is an opportunity to preserve and manage a landscape of unique geographic, historical and open space features in Frederick County as well as a large area of mid-Maryland. The logical boundary for this area must be I-270 on the east, to where it meets the Monocacy River, on the northwest to the Potomac River, and then following the Montgomery County Boundary to I-270. This triangular boundary makes sense for the Sugarloaf Region and the Livable Frederick Master Plan.

The Livable Frederick Master Plan suggests that at some point an Urbana Community Growth Area should be considered in the vicinity of the I-270/MD 80 interchange which could incorporate land on the west side of I-270. But this suggestion is premature, inconsistent and incompatible with the current Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Decisions regarding land use and development, whether employment, residential or other, cannot be considered in isolation. All necessary public facilities must be planned and a reasonable funding plan must be identified. A variety of other factors, including changing employment, demographic, and environmental patterns and conditions must be integral to the decisions.

The Urbana Community Growth Area as envisioned in the Livable Frederick Plan would include high density, multi-use development served by multi-modal transit stations. This Growth Area also presumes high density development radiating northward from Montgomery County along the I-270 corridor served by mass transit. It is important to recall that the Livable Frederick Master Plan states on page 45 that the Urbana Community Growth Area, which would be part of the Interstate Corridor, “emphasizes transit-oriented, mixed-use development to be served by a practical and affordable transit line (e.g. , Bus Rapid Transit, Transit-way).”

The Demise of the I-270 Technology Corridor

This is not happening. On the west side of I-270 there is an 18-mile gap in development between Germantown and Frederick with only a discount retail mall and a jail in Clarksburg. Why, you may ask. A primary reason is that the west side has no interconnected transportation network like MD 355 on the east side. But more importantly, it appears that the heyday of the I-270 Technology Corridor is over, made obsolete by the technologies it was intended to promote. The engine for economic growth in Frederick County is not the I-270 Technology Corridor coming from the south but the robust economic development radiating from Frederick City.

In addition, in the context of changing work and commuting patterns, the shift in employment destinations and cores away from Washington and Baltimore, and the shift from bricks and mortar workplaces to remote, online work from home, the future need for two new I-270 interchanges near Urbana at Park Mills Road and Mott Road is far from certain.

This is not the time to set aside properties for a future Urbana Community Growth Area on the west side of I-270 as has been suggested by some Urbana developers. These developers have provided a good product on the east side of I-270 and have clearly made enormous profits. But now is not the time to urbanize the west side, especially without the public transit additions presumed in the Livable Frederick Plan.

This is the time to maximize the preservation efforts of the Sugarloaf Triangle on the west side of I-270 as part of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

It may be appropriate to undertake an Urbana Community Growth Area but the time frame is probably 25 years or more in the future based on our region's experience in planning and constructing "practical and affordable transit lines." If the "practical and affordable transit lines" and other necessary infrastructure become available and affordable in the future, we also will have an opportunity to review other changes in society, many as a result of lessons from the Covid 19 pandemic. These changes will include housing choices, education including better use of broadband, the economy, climate and especially employment patterns. In fact, climate change will be one of the most important factors supporting the preservation and protection of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape and other similar areas.

Who knew that Covid 19 would empty the traffic on I-270, or cause 75% of area workers to work from home and not waste their time and energy commuting the various stretches of the I-270 corridor to brick and mortar workplaces. While much pre-pandemic traffic has returned to I-270, workers have had a chance to consider their work/life alternatives, and they are realizing that two hours-plus spent on the road commuting could be better used in personal, family, and community improvement activities. Real changes are already taking place in the "workplace."

The Lack of Practical and Affordable Transit Lines

If and when the "practical and affordable transit lines" are available, we will need to apply the "development staging principles" as outlined in the Livable Frederick Master Plan, page 66. Principle #1, Development Staging indicates that there needs to be "coordination of development with public infrastructure at the comprehensive planning stage....Significant infrastructure needs - including but not limited to schools, roads, water and sewer service, parks, and public safety facilities - shall be identified in the appropriate long range planning documents." And Principle #2, Funding for Infrastructure Improvements, states that "...Both the County and the land development community are responsible for providing the funding necessary for infrastructure improvements in Community Growth Areas."

In other words, development, whether employment, residential or other, cannot be considered in isolation, but all necessary public facilities must be planned and a reasonable funding plan must be identified. Significant further development, whether residential, or employment or other, cannot be considered in the Sugarloaf Triangle for an Urbana Community Growth Area,

especially for the west side of I-270, due to a lack of transportation and other public infrastructure, especially “practical and affordable transit lines.”

The Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Plan notes on page 40 that “For nearly 50 years, Frederick County’s Comprehensive Plans have identified the development potential along the I-270 Corridor as a major component of the County’s future growth.” But the Plan also notes that only a little over 1,000 jobs have materialized in the area between the Montgomery County line and the fringes of Urbana during those 50 years. Despite developers’ best efforts only Kite Pharma has suggested 200-400 jobs in Urbana and the two existing data centers employ only a few dozen people. The swift employment growth promised in the I-270 Corridor from Montgomery County north to Urbana has not materialized. Employment prospects have been so sparse for a major Urbana developer that five years ago he convinced the County to rezone hundreds of acres of employment-zoned land on the east side of I-270 to residential. This situation is reminiscent of the planner’s aphorism, “you can zone it gold mines but it don’t make it so.”

The Impact of the Pandemic

The concept of the I-270 Corridor is changing right before our eyes, and even since the adoption of the Livable Frederick Master Plan in 2019 before the Pandemic. The Pandemic has changed our world. Did we ever expect to see the traffic on I-270 reduced to a trickle as a large part of the economy went on-line? Did we ever expect to see so much of our economy go on-line so quickly? Did we realize our work force could be so flexible or experience so many resignations as people seek jobs that better support their lives and lifestyles? While some pre-pandemic traffic will return, this will be a temporary phenomenon as many people make permanent work/life adjustments to work primarily from home and avoid two or more hours of commuting time. Many of the brick and mortar employment centers of the I-270 corridor will become a thing of the past.

The Rise of Frederick City

Frederick City is now the central hub of the County’s economic base as we have less dependence on the I-270 and I-70 Corridors for transportation and employment. As the Livable Frederick Plan notes on page 79, “Intra-commuters” already comprise 46% of commutes, “in-commuters” another 21%, and “out-commuters” just 33% of commutes. We can expect that 33% to significantly reduce over time as more workers adopt online alternatives. The pandemic reduced those “out-commutes” dramatically. This trend has been growing, is supported by the fact that in Frederick County even eight years ago 70% of adults already had broadband at home. That percentage has and will increase as significant public funding becomes available to support further broadband expansion.

As patterns of employment growth in Frederick County continue to shift away from roadway corridors to other places, a logical pattern is developing, growing out from the Frederick City

core. The County and State are planning transportation improvements logically where they should - to expand US 15 through and around the city to support that growth. While the State is also suggesting a study of HOV/HOT lanes from I-495 to Frederick, note this is only a study.

Based on past experience, transit to Frederick along the I-270 Corridor, those “practical and affordable transit lines,” are likely a long way off, at least 25-50 years in light of competing transportation needs around the State. The best transit bet for the foreseeable future is upgrading the MARC rail system. The idea stated in the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan that “future public and private investments in our mobility may encourage the placement of multi-modal transit centers, compact transit-oriented villages, or growth of Urbana’s existing biological and information technology hub along the I-270 corridor” must be placed far into the future. Neither current conditions and infrastructure nor those in the foreseeable future support the withholding of land on the west side of I270 from the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan for “placement of multi-modal transit centers and transit-oriented villages” or any other forms of intensive development.

Indefinite Deferral of the Urbana Community Growth Area

Given these rapidly evolving economic, employment, climate and other changes, it is more important than ever to support the preservation of the Sugarloaf Triangle and the logical organic growth of Frederick City. The concept of an Urbana Community Growth Area on the west side of I-270 and exemption of lands on the west side of I-270 from the Sugarloaf Overlay Zone as a set-aside for some kind of transit-dependent development are premature. All of the Sugarloaf Triangle area west of I-270, including the Urbana interchange at Route 80, should be included or restored to the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Dolan, Mary

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 12:44 PM
To: 'Nick Carrera'; Planning Commission
Cc: Goodfellow, Tim
Subject: RE: IT'S SO HARD TO FOLLOW THIS ON THE GOVERNMENT CHANNEL!!!!

Dear Mr. Carrera,

Thank you for your message. We will make every effort to provide map numbers during our presentations. We recognize that it is important for you and other members of the public to be able to follow the discussion.

Best,
Kim

Kimberly Golden Brandt
Livable Frederick Director
kgbrandt@frederickcountymd.gov
o: (301) 600-1144
c: (410) 598-9026

Livable Frederick Planning and Design Office <http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/livablefrederick>
30 North Market Street
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 600-1138

Division of Planning and Permitting
<https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/planning>
Frederick County Government
<https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/>

-----Original Message-----

From: Nick Carrera <mjcarrera@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 11:12 AM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Subject: IT'S SO HARD TO FOLLOW THIS ON THE GOVERNMENT CHANNEL!!!!

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

We don't see all the things on the screen that Goodfellow refers to;

we don't see speakers identified;

the maps are small and lack enough detail to find my property;

Dolan, Mary

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 1:24 PM
To: Nick Carrera
Cc: Brandt, Kimberly G.; Goodfellow, Tim
Subject: RE: Sugarloaf Plan -- design standards for barns, etc.

Good afternoon:

Thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts on the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Your comments will be shared with the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Karen L. James
Administrative Specialist
Division of Planning & Permitting
Frederick County Government
30 North Market Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701
301-600-1138

From: Nick Carrera <mjcarrera@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 6:19 PM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Cc: Boesch, Devra <fboesch@erols.com>; Fitzgerald, Dean <deanfitzgerald@heavytimber.net>; Lubozynski, Joe <joelubozynski@heavytimber.net>; Carrera, Alexandra <sasha.carrera@gmail.com>; Carrera, Johnny <johnnyquercus@me.com>; Carrera, Nicholas <mjcarrera@comcast.net>
Subject: Sugarloaf Plan -- design standards for barns, etc.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Members of the Planning Commission,

October 20, 2021

I phoned today at 1:15 and was at times #3, #6, and #1 in the queue. After 30 minutes of waiting, I gave up and went back to clearing brush near my barn. So I'm writing, and my comments won't be as brief as if I'd been able to phone. While it's nice to watch the proceedings on TV, it's a shame when technology lets us down.

I'm Nick Carrera, at 2602 Thurston Road, intersection of Peters Rd.

In my main remarks, I refer to Design Standards in the Appendix, page A-20:

For several years I've been a docent for the annual Barnstormers Tour. This event is sponsored by the Frederick Landmarks Foundation, as a fundraiser for its historical landmarks work in Frederick. Each year, a generous handful of interesting barns is identified in a compact area of the county and the public are invited to visit, examine, and ask questions of the docents. We hope visitors leave with an appreciation for the design and craftsmanship of our handsome barns, as well as a deeper love of the county's important rural heritage.

Docents are familiarized with many barns in each year's training, led by Dean Fitzgerald. As a consequence, I've seen dozens of barns all over the county. At a typical farm, the house is located near the road and the barn and dependencies are located near the house. Farm buildings are thus usually visible from the road. This is the case for my farm, the first item on page A-1 of your Appendix.

A few years ago I had my old log barn fixed up by Fitzgerald Heavy Timber, the same Fitzgerald as above, and the same company the county has engaged to repair the damaged covered bridge. This outfit has the skill and the respect needed for repairing or restoring old and historically significant wooden structures. They repaired my 200-year-old barn to look much as it had when new, with its boring sides without windows, shutters, or other unneeded architectural features -- just a plain, honest barn. Neighbors have told me how glad they are that I fixed up my barn instead of tearing it down (which would have been *far, far* cheaper). Each morning I walk past it in fetching the newspapers from the road. Seeing that barn, though perhaps it be plain, *always* pleases me.

Farms are what you get with a rural landscape. On them you're going to see efficient, no-nonsense buildings that don't correspond to some antiseptic, Hollywood-Walt Disney idea of a farm. Farms may not look pretty, they may be noisy, and they may smell bad, but they keep the country and our county going. Please keep this in mind when you consider the design standards in the Sugarloaf Plan. Keep them practical and not onerous.

Addendum, since I have space:

I've written you before and will do so again, regarding the irregular process and unsatisfactory result associated with the Cutout in the eastern boundary. You wisely finessed that issue by restoring the boundary, at least for discussion purposes, to its March location. I shared your surprise at still seeing maps, at today's briefing, with that Cutout in the eastern boundary. Here is a link to the March draft that will allow you to see maps with the earlier boundary:

<file:///C:/Users/mjcar/AppData/Local/Temp/Sugarloaf%20Area%20Plan%20Staff%20Draft%2020210302.pdf>

I am one of many who are urging a further boundary change, in extending the eastern boundary further north along I-270, to the Monocacy River, and then follow the river downstream till it re-meets Fingerboard Road. This seems a more "natural" boundary, and would better protect the Hope Hill community and the Monocacy National Battlefield Park. You may have seen my "Two-fer" letter in the September 8 *Frederick News-Post*.

I would like to see some changes in the presentation on TV and online. We often don't see the slides shown in the room, which you can see. We seldom see identification of members or briefers who are speaking.

I agree with the concern regarding notification of owners who will be affected by changes to their property. I am somewhere on the map showing changes to RC from Ag, since the Urbana Branch flows through me. But I really can't make it out on the small map, and I've no idea if that will change the amount of land I can continue to lease to my hay farmer in Jefferson.

Finally, a small point. Mr Roderick was a friend of my parents-in-law, Leon and Ethel Loeb. His name lives on in "his" road, but is often mispronounced. Remember he has a "road," and it is pronounced "ROAD-erick."

I end my comments with an invitation. I'd be happy for you to visit me. I can show you my old house, my shutterless but handsome barn, and give you a flavor of our lovely part of the Sugarloaf Plan that would be adversely affected by the Cutout so beloved by Thomas Natelli -- it's just about a quarter-mile from me.

Sincerely,

Nick Carrera, Wellcome Farms/Bloomsbury, 1781

Dolan, Mary

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2021 3:11 PM
To: bcpoteat@gmail.com
Cc: Brandt, Kimberly G.; Goodfellow, Tim
Subject: RE: Sugarloaf Plan

Good afternoon:

Thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts on the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

Your comments will be shared with the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Karen L. James
Administrative Specialist
Division of Planning & Permitting
Frederick County Government
30 North Market Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701
301-600-1138

From: bcpoteat@gmail.com <bcpoteat@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2021 12:00 PM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Cc: Council Members <CouncilMembers@FrederickCountyMD.gov>; Gardner, Jan <JGardner@FrederickCountyMD.gov>
Subject: Sugarloaf Plan

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

October 10, 2021

To: Frederick County Planning Commission
Cc: County Council, Frederick County
County Executive, Frederick County
From: Blanca Poteat
Frederick County Resident, Member of Sugarloaf Plan Advisory Group

Subject: Comments on Draft Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan

The Sugarloaf Plan presents a strong, well-researched case for protecting this “treasured landscape” as an essential natural resource for the present and as a legacy for the future.

Our Shared Natural Legacy

It is the shared responsibility of vigilant communities and public officials to protect and defend our natural areas for the benefit of present and future inhabitants. Sugarloaf Mountain cannot protect itself and its surroundings. This is the responsibility of the people who care about it and understand its importance.

Sugarloaf Mountain is a unique natural feature. Frederick County is fortunate to be its home. Sugarloaf’s viewshed is vast, extending to many places around and beyond the County. This mountain is important to the region both historically and environmentally. Its open space, streams and tree cover have long been a cherished visitor destination and are increasingly

important to the County and the region in its urgent efforts to address climate change. Sugarloaf Mountain should also be recognized as an essential keystone of the region's "treasured landscapes."

The identities of individuals and other factors that may have caused the late "cut out" of properties on the west side of I270 from the Plan, as well as the scenario that led to the change, all offer insights into any undue influence on the upcoming choices and decisions of County officials. However, these aspects should not distract from the central discussion of how to most effectively secure the long-term protection of the entire Sugarloaf Plan region.

Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District – Action Steps

- Expand the boundary: I270 to the east, the Montgomery County line to the south, the Potomac River on the west, and the Monocacy River on the north. This boundary is manageable, recognizable, logical, defensible, and has growing public support within and beyond the community.
- Include current commercial properties: Vet/boarding facility, cannabis dispensary, and landscaping company warehouse should be re-included in the Sugarloaf Overlay Zone with any future development activity on those parcels subject to special exception.
- Restore "cut out" properties: Properties owned by Urbana developer Natelli, which were included in the Plan's March 2021 version but "cut out" of the Plan's July 2021 version, should be restored to the Sugarloaf Overlay Zone.
- Don't postpone decisions pending future land use plans: The Urbana Corridor Plan and the Urbana Growth Area Plan might reassess the land uses at the I270/Route 80 interchange and consider transit-oriented development (TOD). These future plan discussions do not explain or justify withholding the "cut out" properties.

Reasons for Action Steps

Gateway to Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape

- I270 interchanges at Urbana in Frederick County and Hyattstown in Montgomery County are the primary routes for visitors driving west to Sugarloaf Mountain.
- Expansion of development on the west side of I270 near the Urbana/Route 80 interchange would despoil Frederick County's gateway to Sugarloaf.
- Both of these interchanges already have convenient service and commercial areas for travelers and residents on the east side of I270. Locating service areas on the west side of I270 would be redundant and would create a "change in the character of the neighborhood" to be used as justification for further west side development.
- Both of these interchanges are surrounded on the west side primarily by open space, consistent with the Sugarloaf natural area outlined in the Sugarloaf Plan.
- In Montgomery County, the Sugarloaf gateway is partially protected from development by the County's Agricultural Reserve.
- The proposed Sugarloaf Overlay Zone would be a positive step toward protecting Frederick County's Sugarloaf gateway at Urbana.

Keystone Connection

- Sugarloaf Mountain is a natural area keystone. Frederick County's commitment through the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan to protect 17,000 acres of the Sugarloaf Mountain area, including the 3,200 acre Sugarloaf park, will leverage that investment into connection with 119,733 additional acres in other neighboring parks and natural areas.*
- This connection of some of the State's "most precious cultural and natural resource lands" could expand toward South Mountain Park's 7,520 acres and Catoctin Mountain National Park's 5,770 acres, as well as to the 2,193 mile Appalachian Trail, 40 miles of which pass through Frederick County.
- Growing private land preservation and easement efforts in the Sugarloaf area (Plan Map 1-2) and elsewhere in Frederick County are adding to the natural area protections that the Sugarloaf Plan supports. And Maryland's Rural Legacy Areas are helping to protect "...delineated areas within a county that include both working farms and ecologically significant landscapes..." The suggested inclusion of the Sugarloaf Plan area in the Carrollton Manor Rural Legacy Area would offer further protection and connection to nearby Rural Legacy areas:
- Carrollton Manor Rural Legacy Area 38,265 acres
- Mid-Maryland Frederick Rural Legacy Area 25,791 acres

- Mid-Maryland Montgomery County Rural Legacy Area 49,907 acres

Future-Oriented Planning Considerations

- Open space has value of a different kind.
- Open space is not just undeveloped space. “Open” may be its “highest and best use.”
- The profit motive and expansion of the tax base fuel development regardless of location.
- Preservation and environmental protection do not generate monetary profits or jobs and thus are at a disadvantage in the land use debate. (**Do mountains have legal standing? See below.)
- Protection of the County’s farmlands, water and other natural resources is increasingly important for local food production capacity to respond to climate changes and distribution system disruptions.
- Current zoning for Agriculture and Resource Conservation provides some recognition of its “highest and best use” but does not protect it from development.
- Frederick County planners have long used I270 as the boundary to distinguish the developed areas and public services on the east from the open space and undeveloped areas on the west. Both areas are important in their place. The maps in the July 2021 Sugarloaf Plan (A-15 to A-18) show I270 as this long-held boundary.
- Development of any kind engenders more development and causes “change in the character of the neighborhood,” creating precedent to justify more development.
- The price of open space may be lower than land prices in developed and infrastructured areas. But the lasting cost to communities of permanently losing open space – unique and irreplaceable areas that cannot be replicated – is steep.
- The Livable Frederick Implementation Program (Fy2019/2020 draft) priority list includes Treasured Landscape Management Plans for Sugarloaf and Catoclin (p. 19) and Agricultural Infrastructure (p. 20).
- Livable Frederick’s “Making Our Environment Vision A Reality” includes “Category: Land: Goal: ...The natural environment and its habitat provision and ecosystem services are critical to our quality of life, and so they should be the primary consideration in all land planning and governmental decision-making processes.”
- Employment-related traffic will continue to change as more technology workers work from home, some local and some in locations where high-speed internet is more robust. (DC reports only 25% of pre-pandemic workers have returned to offices in downtown.)
- Technology advances and business expansion are no longer dependent on transportation corridors, making TOD (transportation-oriented development) outdated. The City of Frederick and nearby areas have evolved as a research and development and high tech employment hub independently of northward business expansion along the I270 corridor from Montgomery County and the Washington Metropolitan region.
- Frederick County should focus on its own local employment development efforts and be flexible to changing economic and technology conditions. Its planning efforts need not depend on Montgomery County’s “High Tech Corridor,” which was conceived decades ago as a competitive location for bricks and mortar offices and labs, close to key federal labs and regulatory agencies, but has been superseded by internet-enabled management and dispersed research and development. Technology development has slowed in Germantown and is minimal in Clarksburg.
- The previous metropolitan area planning concept of “wedges and corridors,” focused on employment along the transportation corridors leading to the Washington core, is obsolete and its influence should be retired.
- Transportation infrastructure and networks will still be needed in the future but primarily as distribution networks for goods rather than for commuting workers. Distribution centers should be located in areas with adequate transportation and other infrastructure, not in open space.
- As internet activity continues to grow, the need for data security and redundancy grows. Data centers should be located in areas with adequate electricity and water supply infrastructure, not in open space.

In Conclusion

- The central goal: Secure the long-term protection of the entire Sugarloaf Plan region.
- Sugarloaf Mountain is a unique natural feature and a keystone for the region’s treasured landscapes. Frederick County is fortunate to be its home.
- It is the shared responsibility of vigilant communities and public officials to protect and defend our natural areas for the benefit of present and future inhabitants.

***The Sugarloaf area: a keystone connecting neighboring natural areas and a gateway to other treasured landscapes:**

Sugarloaf Mountain 3200 acres
Monocacy Natural Resources Management Area 1800
Little Bennett Regional Park 3700
Monocacy Battlefield National Park 1647
C&O Canal National Park 19,586
Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve 93,000
Sub-Total 122,933 acres

Cunningham Falls State Park 6,080 acres
South Mountain State Park 7,520 acres
Catoctin Mountain National Park 5,770 acres
Sub-Total 19,370 acres

Total 142,303 acres

Appalachian Trail 2,193 miles, 40 of which are in Frederick County

**** Do Mountains Have Legal Standing?**

From Justice William O. Douglas' dissent in *Sierra Club v Morton*, 405 U.S. 727, 741 (1972) :

Do Trees Have Legal Standing?

"The critical question of 'standing' would be simplified and also put neatly in focus if we fashioned a federal rule that allowed environmental issues to be litigated before federal agencies or federal courts in the name of the inanimate object about to be despoiled, defaced, or invaded by roads and bulldozers and where injury is the subject of public outrage. Contemporary public concern for protecting nature's ecological equilibrium should lead to the conferral of standing upon environmental objects to sue for their own preservation. . . The corporation sole – a creature of ecclesiastical law – is an acceptable adversary and large fortunes ride on its cases. The ordinary corporation is a 'person' for purposes of the adjudicatory processes, whether it represents proprietary, spiritual, aesthetic, or charitable causes. So it should be as respects valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, or even air that feels the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life. The river, for example, is the living symbol of all the life it sustains or nourishes – fish, aquatic insects, water ouzels, otter, fisher, deer, elk, bear, and all other animals, including man, who are dependent on it or who enjoy it for its sight, its sound, or its life. The river as plaintiff speaks for the ecological unit of life that is part of it."

In his argument, Justice Douglas made reference to Christopher Stone's article "Should Trees Have Standing – Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects" that appeared in 45 S. Cal L. Rev. 450 (1972). The article was reprinted in the 25th Anniversary edition of *Should Trees Have Standing and other essays on law, morals and the environment* by Christopher D. Stone, Oceana Publications, N.Y., 1996.

<http://blog.mass.gov/masslawlib/legal-topics/do-trees-have-standing/>

Sent from Mail for Windows

Dolan, Mary

From: Ryan Couillard <rcouillard12@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 12:41 PM
To: Goodfellow, Tim
Cc: KGB@frederickcountymd.gov
Subject: Stewart Hill Road Resident -- More Logging Concerns

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Tim,

We spoke several times about a year ago, regarding the unpermitted logging project pursued by my neighbor on Stewart Hill Road on the north side of Sugarloaf Mountain. I've attended a number of the Sugarloaf Stakeholders' Advisory Group meetings, and unfortunately missed the August 17th and 19th public hearings addressing the Sugarloaf Area Plan draft.

First of all, congratulations on the Livable Frederick Master Plan draft receiving favorable review thus far. I'm sure that has been lots of work for your committee!

I believe, when we spoke, that you assured additional zoning ordinances would be selectively levied on particular RC zoned areas of "great natural beauty," such as Sugarloaf Mountain, which (so I believed) would make logging permits more difficult to obtain in these areas. After reading through the LFMP, I was discouraged to see several pages devoted to celebrating Stronghold, Inc, including their "demonstration forest" and the "sustainable" selective thinning of the forest. **Can you perhaps correct me if I misunderstood what I read in the LFMP document?** Believe me, I understand and am grateful for Stronghold's generosity to the county - by granting easement for recreational hiking of its trails - but I don't believe their logging business is even remotely regulated or compliance-enforced, at least based on my personal experience.

The Frederick County Chief Compliance Inspector, Eric Dodson, informed me during my neighbor's logging project last year that it is practically impossible to quantify or regulate compliance regarding the quantity of trees cut in a "selective thinning" timber harvest plan. This, of course, means that the logger and landowner decide the quantity of trees to cut, which generally results in a heavy harvest and a larger commercial gain. There is a generic "square footage" of tree per acre which must remain, as denoted on the timber harvest plan, but it is very difficult for a logger to quantify, and compliance to this important stipulation on the harvest plan is essentially impossible to enforce. The pattern I am trying to draw attention to is this: old ways of conducting business and making money are still destroying our local natural resources, and despite county efforts to modernize and protect these resources, still no regulation or sensible laws have been enacted by our county council which would **actually** protect the forest on Sugarloaf Mountain! Without regulatory backing or common-sense laws protecting resources in watersheds, on creeks, and in local tourist destinations, the Forestry Board and Plans and Permitting division have virtually no "teeth" to deny permits, and - in the words of the Plans and Permitting head, Gary Hessong - "we just give a rubber stamp of approval," and county compliance inspectors have no "teeth" to halt logging projects if they have breached their timber harvest plan by thinning more than allowed. These are serious issues! Lastly, Russell Thompson, a Stronghold, Inc. property manager, mentioned privately to me that they try to avoid any logging projects near the popular hiking destinations! Why? To not outrage the public, in my opinion.

On a more personal note, I write on behalf of several neighbors on my street, Stewart Hill Road, which resides on the northern slope of the northernmost of the Sugarloaf peaks. Though I have only been on the land here for

almost 5 years now, I have witnessed the aftermath of a greater than 100 acre logging project directly west of my property, by Stronghold, Inc (c. 2015), as well as a 10 acre heavy thinning by my neighbor (not Stronghold), last summer (here is a Frederick News Post article which documented the unpermitted logging project my neighbor attempted: <https://bit.ly/2ZkDqus>). My other neighbors, of course, have witnessed several other hundreds of acres being thinned on our road alone in the past 15 years.

The current pressing issue is the following: Stronghold's "stewardship" timber harvest plan to thin the 100 acres of forest adjacent to my property has *not* gone well for the forest health, and six years later, there is 80% to 90% tree death of the remaining trees which were left during the thinning (statistic provided by Michael Kay, who has consulted about this issue). As such, Stronghold has now hired a logger to mark the dead and "dying" trees on the selective thinned acreage, as well as *another* massive acreage plot to the east of our property, directly adjacent and over multiple creeks (deemed by the Frederick Forestry Board as a major tributary to the watershed), at least another 100 acres of Sugarloaf Mountain forest, which is in a largely healthy and pristine condition, with the exception of a small percentage of chestnut oak decline which has been witnessed across the region. The logger has marked a great number of trees, not simply dying chestnut oaks, but many other species and varieties, with little regard for actual tree health. The Stronghold Inc. land manager has called it a "salvage harvest", and noted that normally, they wouldn't have even considered a logging project in this section of the forest for over another decade at least. It is plain what is happening: the small percentage of oak decline has provided another opportunity to make money, all rebranded under the guise of "forest stewardship." If this project is "rubber stamped" like all the rest, it will amount to around 350 acres of forest logged on Stewart Hill Road alone in the last 15 years!

It is believed among arborists and foresters that periodic, infrequent thinning in a forest can boost overall forest health and diversity. Michael Kay discussed with me, as he visited my forest (registered under the "Forest Stewardship Plan" with the Frederick Forestry Board) that the oak decline is believed to be taking place due to the record rainfall of 2018 and the extremely late frost in May 2020. Weakened forests (like the already logged patch to the west of my land) are much more susceptible to oak decline. I'm concerned that few stand to benefit from asking the difficult yet critical question: "Is this unregulated mass thinning of trees - and the collateral damage caused by the heavy machinery used to harvest them - actually weakening our precious forests instead of strengthening them?" I can say, from personal experience, that the large logging project to the direct west of my property has absolutely weakened the forest, which is why now, after several years, the sparse few remaining trees are continuing to dwindle, not thrive. When I look to the precious forest to the east of our property, past the tributary creeks for the Monocacy watershed, I see a healthy, thriving, and diverse forest, with sparse oak decline, which will soon be "salvage" harvested, with new logging roads cut, creeks bridged, and more destruction.

I am - of course - biased in this matter, but beyond that, I am stunned at the apparent disregard for one of our nation's most precious resources: old growth Appalachian hardwood forests, at such a time when carbon sinks are such a necessity to stem the tide of global warming. Is there anything Maryland State can do about this injustice in our region? Sugarloaf stands as the closest vestige of Appalachia to down county Maryland residents, and is a prime day trip destination for many. Please, let's try to do anything that can further the protection and regulation of our precious Sugarloaf Mountain - and all Frederick forests - from commercial greed.

As I have always said, I greatly appreciate your efforts, and the efforts of your colleagues, in trying to make change where it matters! Thank you very much, for reading my long-winded email, and **please advise if there is anyone else who should receive my email, or if there is anything further I can do as a constituent of the county.**

Thanks so much Tim,
Ryan

10.4.21

TO: Frederick Planning Commission,

The property on the corner of Thurston & Dixon Roads (32 \pm ac) has been in my family for over 40 years & currently has a third generation living on it.

We do not want our property included in the Sugarloaf conservation overlay or any other conservation program at this time.

Thank you,

Kidsi Boney
Lyndi Bryant.

TO : Frederick planning Commission,

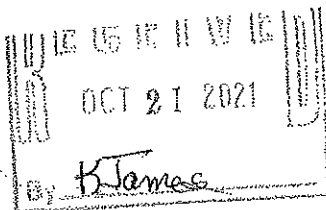
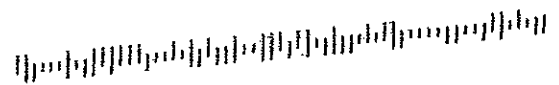
Vicki Bazar
2719 Thurston Rd.
Frederick, MD 21704

BALTIMORE MD 212
6 OCT 2021 PM 4 L



Frederick Planning Commission
Winchester Hall
12 E Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

21701-543799



Dolan, Mary

From: Nick Carrera <mjcarrera@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 11:32 AM
To: Sugarloaf Area Plan; Planning Commission; County Executive; Council Members
Cc: Carrera, Nicholas
Subject: The Sharks are Circling -- further development in Treasured Sugarloaf Plan area?

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

In yesterday's mail was a solicitation from Cummings & Co., a realty company with offices in Maryland and Pennsylvania, seeking to sell a 104-acre lot at 8602 Covell Road. According to the Maryland SDAT real estate site, this property is Parcel 0023 on Tax Map 0111. It is owned by a couple living in Silver City, New Mexico.

Here is a quote from the realtor's mailing: "This property is an amazing location for you to enjoy *or the potential development of up to 10, 10-acre lots.*" [italics added]

Covell Road opens off Thurston Road, a narrow, hilly, curvy, two-lane road. The last time I saw Covell Rd it was still a gravel road.

The picture shown on the realtor's card is a gentle, forested hillside; maybe it's an accurate depiction of the property for sale, maybe not. From my reading of the "Forestlands ..." section of the July draft Sugarloaf Plan, we're not seeking to lose more forestland within the Sugarloaf Plan area.

Best regards on this blustery fall day,

Nick Carrera; Thurston Rd, Urbana District

October 31, 2021

To: Frederick County Planning Commission
Cc: Frederick County Council
Frederick County Executive
Frederick County Sustainability Commission

From: Blanca Poteat, County Resident
Member, Sugarloaf Plan Advisory Group

Subject: Draft Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan
Change of Plans - Climate and Covid

Thank you for your consideration of these and other comments regarding the Draft Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan. Due to the complex issues involved, and my personal concerns for the future and legacy of the Sugarloaf area, it is difficult to be brief.

Frederick County's present and future residents depend for their quality of life on land use decisions that recognize and adjust to the "new normal" of ongoing covid- and climate-driven conditions.

Frederick County is part of a world that is grappling with rapid reassessment and reinvention in the face of climate change and covid. Livable Frederick and the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan must reflect these shifting circumstances and continue to protect the Sugarloaf region and the open space on the west side of I270 near Urbana and the south County area.

These two overarching factors, climate change and pandemic change, are essential overlays on Frederick County land use planning, including the Livable Frederick Master Plan and the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan.

These changes are compelling reasons to:

- Postpone and reevaluate any proposed cut-outs from the Sugarloaf Plan of properties on the west side of the Urbana I270/Route 80 interchange in anticipation of Community Growth Areas and Corridor Plan changes.
- Extend the Sugarloaf Plan area on the west side of I270 northward to the Monocacy River.
- Reevaluate land use and planning assumptions based on pre-pandemic and pre-climate change scenarios.

Open space is not merely undeveloped space. In the context of climate and covid changes, open space should be considered the "highest and best use" of the entire Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape area.

The sustainability of the County as a "livable" environment depends on protecting its essential water resources and farmlands for local as well as international food production and its woodlands and forests for carbon reduction. Except for the suggested "cut-out" of properties on the west side of I270 in the Urbana area, most of the Sugarloaf Plan recommends this level of protection. The "cut-out" should be reintegrated in the Plan.

Allowing further development on the west side of I270 would establish a "change in the character of the neighborhood" leading to justification for further west side development and permanent destruction of existing agricultural and natural areas and water and forest resources.

Considering developer and/or corporate industrial projects (as rumored) on the west side of I270 near Urbana is allowing the “tail to wag the dog,” whereby developers and corporations determine the long-term reshaping of the “treasured landscape” with short-term economic development “opportunities.” These projects offer short term developer profit but require short- and long-term County support. They serve to further erode the County’s and community’s planning prerogatives and commitment to protect open space areas.

Sustainability involves focusing public funding on concentrating development, whether employment, industrial, commercial, residential or other, in areas with adequate public facilities, utilities, and transportation. In the context of climate change and covid, it is fiscally irresponsible and short-sighted to extend development to un-serviced open space areas. In the climate/covid context, the County needs to maximize the development and redevelopment of the County’s urban core, Frederick City and the South Frederick area.

To repeat, two compelling factors are changing Frederick County’s land use planning assumptions and scenarios:

Factor 1 – Climate

This County’s environment depends for its protection and future sustainability on its residents’ and its officials’ decisions and adaptations. The mission statement of the County’s Sustainability Commission emphasizes “the natural environment’s critical relevance in making community decisions that will sustain for all time a healthy, abundant, affordable, and inspiring place to live and work.”

The Livable Frederick Master Plan presents a thorough analysis, suggested approach, and future “aspirational” vision that includes and emphasizes the County’s natural environment, the Green Infrastructure Sector and the Agricultural Infrastructure Sector.

However, economic growth, community development, and open space protection are not inevitable or always successful nor are they always shaped by a land use plan’s carefully crafted and sequential logic. Overlooked and unexpected things happen.

Our changing climate, one aspect of the “natural environment” and long overlooked but no longer ignore-able, is destabilizing long-held planning and land use presumptions about the future. Land use planning and “community decisions” must now recognize the emerging and unpredictable effects of climate change and must include flexibility to adapt to these effects.

While other Maryland areas may have experienced more floods, storms and other weather incidents, Frederick County has, too, and is not a guaranteed “goldilocks zone.” Rapidly emerging and more severe weather patterns are already affecting farming and local food production, work and school, supply chains and services, here and everywhere. In addition, growth pressures and public service costs are intensifying as people and businesses migrate to areas perceived to be less affected by weather disruptions, including many areas of Frederick County. In this context, protection of local water, trees and agricultural spaces is more essential than ever.

(See “5 takeaways from the major new U.N. climate report,” below)
(NASA definition of “goldilocks zone:” The habitable zone is the area around a star where it is not too hot and not too cold for liquid water to exist on the surface of surrounding planets.)

Factor 2 - Covid

The ongoing covid19 pandemic has dramatically changed our long-held habits and expectations, locally and globally, regarding employment, education, internet connectivity, supply-chain distribution, business services, health care and other public services. And land use planning.

Many County jobs require on-site workers and are not adaptable to remote employment, but are also disrupted by climate or pandemic factors, including labs, health care, skilled construction and building trades, farming, manufacturing, trucking, food services, public transit, and other public services and safety.

However, during the pandemic many other workers, with jobs within and beyond the County, have adapted to remote work, part- or full-time, if reliable internet connectivity is available to them. These technology workers have included teachers, school and college staff, doctors, counselors, data analysts and software engineers, statisticians, IT and security professionals, financial managers, therapists, journalists, marketers, and attorneys.

Many remote workers have discovered that they prefer working at home and value reclaiming time previously spent commuting. Many employers have adjusted to remote staffing, as well, and realized improved productivity and reduced office space needs and costs. The amount of vacant office, retail and commercial, flex and industrial space available in the County testifies to these and other continuing employment changes. Reduction in traffic, commuter and otherwise, on I270, I70 and other local roads, especially during the height of the pandemic, offers further evidence of this technology-supported shift.

Child care, virtual education, online shopping and delivery activity, take-out food and most other aspects of daily life have adjusted to the pandemic-driven “new normal.” In fact, growing numbers of workers nationwide are quitting their jobs to search for more fulfilling, closer to home, better-paying ones, to create better work-life balance. Many employers hit especially hard by the pandemic, like trucking, retail and food service, are increasing their pay scales and benefits to attract potential employees. And in response to the combined effects of climate change and covid, it’s possible to plan for less highway traffic, with more worker transport and goods distribution by existing and expanded rail lines. (See link to McKinsey report on the Future of Work After Covid, below.)

Planning assumptions that focus potential new development in the southern area of the County on the west side of I270, based on the expectation and perception of the I270 corridor as a growing commuting and employment engine, are inconsistent with the Sugarloaf Plan’s, Livable Frederick’s and the Sustainability Commission’s stated commitments to protect the Sugarloaf environment and to recognize the importance of the natural environment in land use decisions.

These planning assumptions exaggerate the I270 corridor’s influence on Frederick County growth and are inconsistent with the new Montgomery County master plan update, Thrive 2050, and the I270 plan, Corridor Forward, currently under consideration by the Montgomery County Council and Montgomery County Executive. (See links, below.)

As further illustration of these changing circumstances, DealBook, a feature of the New York Times, has scheduled an online summit on November 9-10, 2021, “to take stock of a world in the midst of rapid reinvention, grappling with the ripples of Covid and rewriting the rules in real time.”

To repeat, Frederick County is part of this world that is grappling with rapid reassessment and reinvention in the face of climate change and covid. Livable Frederick and the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan must reflect these shifting circumstances, concentrate development in the Frederick City and South Frederick core, and continue to protect the Sugarloaf region and the open space on the west side of I270 near Urbana and the south County area.

Further comments:

Sugarloaf Plan Priorities and Livable Frederick Master Plan - Inconsistencies

Livable Frederick Plan: p. 34 Multi-Modal Places and Corridors Scenarios

“Our county has existing infrastructure connections to the greater Baltimore-Washington Region, through rail service, transit operations, and major highways. In this scenario, these existing assets are leveraged to create multi-modal corridors that help catalyze the redevelopment of aging retail and office areas, while creating new mixed-use places in the southern part of the county.....”

Comment: Cutting specific properties out of the Sugarloaf Plan in anticipation of “leveraging” existing and future transportation infrastructure and “creating new mixed-use places in the southern part of the county” is based on outdated planning assumptions that County employment growth will be fed primarily by the I270 transportation corridor from the south.

Livable Frederick Plan, p. 48 The Green Infrastructure Sector

“As the amount of developed land has increased, natural areas have not only decreased in quality and quantity but have undergone significant fragmentation. Locally, this can negatively impact the vitality of the ecosystem and the health and happiness of county residents....The Green Infrastructure Sector is therefore identified to support the conservation of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas in the county, to direct urban/suburban growth away from green infrastructure and sensitive areas, and to ensure the protection and integration of green infrastructure where it exists within areas targeted for growth.”

Comment: Direct urban and suburban growth away from the west side of I270 and Sugarloaf and control further “significant fragmentation” of the natural areas.

Livable Frederick Plan, p. 60 The Agricultural Infrastructure Sector

“The Agricultural Infrastructure Sector is identified to support continued and innovative agricultural development, such as regenerative farming practices, and direct urban/suburban growth away from agricultural resources....

Frederick County has one of the strongest agricultural economies in Maryland. This economic strength derives from several key components, each of which remains healthy only because Frederick County citizens demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining the practice and culture of farming. The collection of resources, activities, systems, and knowledge necessary to nurture a healthy agricultural economy is called our Agricultural Infrastructure. This Agricultural Infrastructure must be diligently maintained, improved or expanded when necessary to respond to changing market demands or evolving technologies, and physically deployed in such a way as to serve the needs of farmers throughout the active agricultural areas in Frederick County.”

Comment: The proposed cut-out of 300-plus acres from the Sugarloaf Plan on the west side of I270 contradicts the commitment that the “Agricultural Infrastructure must be diligently maintained.”

Further Comments on Land Use Planning Assumptions

Part of the purpose of land use and community planning efforts are their focus on guiding, improving and sustaining the present and future landscape for the common good. In the past, these efforts have been shaped and driven by many factors including 1) the separation of residential areas from employment, commercial, service, agricultural, and industrial areas and 2) by the resulting need to move people and goods primarily by cars and trucks between these areas and the need to devote land and public funds for extensive roadway infrastructure.

However, planners began to observe that adding more roadway lanes did not ease traffic congestion. And the “information superhighway” developed and has deeply influenced people’s communication, commerce, mobility and other activities and habits, in fact, every aspect of their families and communities.

But in many places the shape of communities and mobility infrastructure and the underlying planning assumptions and efforts have continued to reflect those pre-internet, pre-climate change, pre-covid land use patterns and dynamics.

However, the mobility of people and work and goods is being redefined and transformed. Our land use planning should reflect these changes.

References

5 takeaways from the major new U.N. climate report.

By Henry Fountain

Published Aug. 9, 2021 Updated Oct. 26, 2021

“On Monday the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a scientific body convened by the United Nations, released a major new report concluding that the world cannot avoid some devastating impacts of climate change, but that there is still a narrow window to keep the devastation from getting even worse.

The report, based on the analysis of more than 14,000 studies, is the clearest and most comprehensive summary yet of the physical science of climate change. It lays out what the climate was like in the past, what it’s like now and what it will be like for decades to come. And it shows how humans can affect future climate through actions they take — or don’t take — now to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

Here are five takeaways from the report:

Human influence has unequivocally warmed the planet.

This report is the sixth assessment of climate science by the U.N. group, and unlike previous reports, this one dispenses with any doubt about who or what is responsible for global warming. “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land,” the report says in its very first finding.

Observed increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere since 1750 can be directly tied to human activity, largely the burning of coal, oil and other fossil fuels as the world became industrialized. Those emissions have increased greatly over time and continue today, as the world grows even warmer. And the impacts are being felt in every region of the world.

Climate science is getting better and more precise.

One of the reasons the report can conclude without a doubt that humans are responsible for global warming is that climate research has greatly improved, even in the eight years since the previous U.N. report was released.

There is much more observational data — temperature measurements and other data from instruments on land, in the oceans and in space — that reduce uncertainty as to what is occurring. The improvement is especially noticeable in some less affluent parts of the world that historically had little capacity for collecting climate data.

Computer models that simulate the climate have also greatly improved, and there is more computer power to run these simulations faster so that they can be repeated over and over. These improvements, plus the ability to plug more and better data into the models, give scientists more confidence that their models are correctly forecasting future climate.

In the last decade great strides have been made in attribution research, which seeks to examine possible links between climate change and specific extreme events like heat waves and heavy rains. Research teams can now quickly analyze an event and determine whether warming made it more or less likely to have occurred, adding to overall confidence in the nature of climate change.

We are locked into 30 years of worsening climate impacts no matter what the world does. The world has already warmed about 1.1 degree Celsius (about 2 degrees Fahrenheit) since the 19th century. The report concludes that humans have put so much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that this warming will continue at least until the middle of the century, even if nations take immediate steps today to sharply cut emissions.

That means some of the noticeable effects the world is seeing now — like extreme droughts, severe heat waves and catastrophic downpours and flooding — will continue to worsen for at least the next 30 years.

Some other impacts will continue for far longer. The enormous ice sheets in Greenland and West Antarctica will continue to melt at least through the end of the century. Global sea level will continue to rise for at least 2,000 years.

Climate changes are happening rapidly.

The report found that some of the changes are greater than they've ever been compared with previous periods of time ranging from centuries to many millennia.

Concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, for example, is greater than at any time in the past two million years. The extent of late-summer sea ice in the Arctic is lower than it's been any time in the past 1,000 years.

But the report also found that changes are happening more quickly now than even in the much more recent past. The rate of sea level rise has roughly doubled since 2006. Each of the past four decades have been successively warmer than the previous one. Heat waves on land have become significantly hotter since 1950 and marine heat waves — bursts of extreme heat in the ocean that can kill marine life — have doubled in frequency in the past four decades.

There is still a window in which humans can alter the climate path.

The report laid out five climate futures, in which humans take varying steps to reduce the emissions that cause warming. Under all of them, the world will reach 1.5 degrees — the more ambitious of the targets set by the Paris climate change agreement in 2015 — by 2040 or sooner.

Under most of the scenarios discussed in the report, warming will continue well beyond 2040, through the remainder of the century. In the worst cases, where the world does little to reduce emissions, temperatures by 2100 could be 3 to 6 degrees Celsius (5.5 to 11 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels. That would have catastrophic consequences.

But the report shows that aggressive, rapid and widespread emissions cuts, beginning now, could limit the warming beyond 2050. In the most optimistic scenario, reaching “net zero” emissions could even bring warming back slightly under 1.5 degrees Celsius in the second half of the century.

Such a scenario would be a mammoth and expensive undertaking for the world. It would also require a level of political will that most governments have so far been unable to muster.”

Henry Fountain specializes in the science of climate change and its impacts. He has been writing about science for The Times for more than 20 years and has traveled to the Arctic and Antarctica.
@henryfountain • Facebook

https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/09/climate/un-climate-report-takeaways.html?mc=aud_dev&ad-keywords=auddevgate&gclid=CjwKCAjw2vOLBhBPEiwAjEeK9ucvG9-RE5iPVVu5jOv14n4sV-8ipPsYcfqGIO6aIbcnpxnjI3yoRoCKLIQAvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

The Future of Work After Covid

“The pandemic accelerated existing trends in remote work, e-commerce, and automation, with up to 25 percent more workers than previously estimated potentially needing to switch occupations.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted labor markets globally during 2020. The short-term consequences were sudden and often severe: Millions of people were furloughed or lost jobs, and others rapidly adjusted to working from home as offices closed. Many other workers were deemed essential and continued to work in hospitals and grocery stores, on garbage trucks and in warehouses, yet under new protocols to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus.

This report on the future of work after COVID-19 is the first of three MGI reports that examine aspects of the post-pandemic economy. The others look at the pandemic’s long-term influence on consumption and the potential for a broad recovery led by enhanced productivity and innovation. Here, we assess the lasting impact of the pandemic on labor demand, the mix of occupations, and the workforce skills required in eight countries with diverse economic and labor market models: China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Together, these eight countries account for almost half the global population and 62 percent of GDP.”

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19>

Montgomery County, Maryland

Thrive 2050 Plan

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/thrive-montgomery-2050/>

Corridor Forward

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/transit-planning/corridor-forward-the-i-270-transit-plan/>